



North Carolina

Fall 2012 Newsletter

Hunter Education Program



The men and women who volunteer as hunter education instructors serve as teachers, mentors and coaches. The service they deliver is, quite literally, lifesaving.



Teachers Become Students in Teacher Skills Workshop

By Carissa Shelton, D-5 Hunter Education Specialist

Any good educator will tell you that the best teacher is experience. Imagine teaching animal science for the first time as a new teacher and expected to teach students how to shear sheep for the show ring for the upcoming county fair, and the extent of your sheep knowledge was counting them when you could not sleep?

That was actually me, my first year teaching, and I had to learn to shear sheep during my planning period before my first group of students arrived. The more sheep I sheared the better I got, and the more expert shearers that I talked to and worked with the better I got. Today, I can shear blue ribbon champions. It was the experience that made me a better shearer, and having expert advice to lead me down the path to shearing champion sheep.

So how does a story about shearing sheep relate to hunter education being taught in the classrooms across the state?

EXPERIENCE makes us better teachers and educators — the heart of the creation of the Teacher Skills Workshop. Many of our classroom teachers who are certified instructors are teaching material that they have little or no experience with the subject. The hunter education staff wanted to create a workshop specifically for teachers that would allow teachers to participate in, receive instructor certification from, and gain experience through hands-on activities. On June 27-29 at the Corpening Training Facility in Crossnore, this idea became a reality. Seventeen teachers from across the state



School teachers at the workshop learned and had fun.

participated in the three days of instruction by the nine district specialists. Some of the teachers were veteran hunter education instructors, and others would be certified at the end of the workshop.

Teachers were exposed to advance courses, offered in mini-sessions before the workshop began in muzzleloading, trapping and orienteering. The opening session conducted that evening covered the program's history, policy and procedures. *continued on page 3*

Tavasso Inducted into International Hunter Education Association's Hall of Fame

The heart and soul of the Hunter Education Program in North Carolina is our volunteer instructors. The International Hunter Education Association and the Wildlife Resources Commission both recognized a big part of that heart and soul, Kim Tavasso, an

instructor from Winterville. A 20-year volunteer with the North Carolina Hunter Education Program, Tavasso was inducted into the IHEA Hall of Fame on May 30, during the association's annual conference, held this year in Kansas City, Mo.

At the August meeting of the Wildlife Commissioners, a special presentation was made to commemorate his hall of fame induction.

"This is quite the honor and to be honest, I am somewhat overwhelmed," Tavasso said. "I was surprised to receive it and it is hard to describe in words how large an honor it is. I am just grateful to the Wildlife Resources Commission and its Hunter Education Program to allow me to reach this level."

Hunter Education Coordinator Travis Casper commended Tavasso for his leadership and innovation.

"This is someone who is responsible for thousands of people successfully completing hunter education, acquiring hunting licenses and enjoying countless hours outdoors," Casper said. "He is truly a hall of famer."



Chairman David Hoyle Jr., Tavasso and Director Gordon Myers.

Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act Passed by Congress

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act (H.R. 3065), which will help ensure that shooters and hunters have high-quality public facilities to participate in recreational shooting sports and to learn about firearms safety.

The bill was included as Title XII of the Conservation and Economic Growth Act (H.R. 2578). Sponsored by Rep. Heath Schuler (D-N.C.), it amends the Pittman-Robertson Act to provide state game and fish agencies with more flexibility and discretion to utilize funds for the creation, enhancement and maintenance of public shooting ranges.

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Executive Director Gordon Myers had appeared before the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs prior to the vote to share the perspectives of state fish and wildlife agencies on the importance of providing safe places for recreational shooting, and marksmanship training for military and law enforcement officers. Myers testified on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which represents the collective voice of all 50 state fish and wildlife agencies.



Public target ranges are much needed, and by some of us more than others.

“It seems fitting that this legislation is being considered as wildlife agencies, industries, and conservation groups have come together this year to mark a hallmark partnership that has led to 75 years of quality hunting, shooting and wildlife-related recreation,” Myers testified. “The Pittman-Robertson Act is the cornerstone and the life blood of one of the most significant and successful partnership approaches to fish and wildlife conservation in our nation’s history.”

The act provides incentives for states to develop much-needed shooting ranges on federal and nonfederal lands by increasing the amount each state could spend of its Pittman-Robertson grant funds on shooting ranges. Because these funds are allocated to states on a formula basis, changing the reimbursement rate would not result in increased federal spending. It does not require a state to use the money on ranges. Instead, it provides incentives. All of these incentives would enhance the ability of states to build and maintain shooting ranges.

Based on Fiscal Year 2011 apportionments, North Carolina would be eligible to allocate an additional \$700K of its apportioned funds to build or upgrade shooting ranges here.

“This is an important victory for all sportsmen, target shooters and firearms owners, as well as for future generations of participants who will need public facilities to enjoy the shooting sports,” said Lawrence G. Keane, senior vice president and general counsel of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the trade association of the firearms, ammunition, hunting and shooting sports industry.

“I am very pleased to see my colleagues on both sides of the aisle come together to pass this common-sense bill,” said Rep. Schuler.

“Today, there are less opportunities than ever before for Americans to participate in recreational shooting activities. H.R. 3065 helps reverse this trend by giving states greater flexibility to use money they already have to better maintain and build public ranges. In turn, the bill will help combat the loss of access and opportunity while helping those paying into the system — sportsmen and outdoorsmen — get a better return on their investment.”

Coyote and Feral Swine Hunting at Night on Private Lands is Now Allowed

Since Aug. 1, landholders have another option to protect their personal property from coyotes and feral swine. Temporary rules are in effect that allow hunting coyotes and feral swine at night with a light on private lands, where allowed by the landowner.

This presents a couple of topics for hunter education instructors. First, of course, is safety when hunting at night. Second is distinguishing coyotes from other canines, like red wolves.

Coyotes and red wolves can share the same habitats, particularly in the area of the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in eastern North Carolina. The red wolf is a protected species while the coyote is an invasive, nuisance species. The two species have similarities in appearance, but there are differences. Red wolves are taller, longer and appear more robust, and are mostly brown and buff colored, often with a reddish, cinnamon color on ears, head and legs. Coyotes are smaller, more scraggly and tend to be light gray, with some black on the tips of outer hair.

The feral swine rule will supersede the permit the Commission previously required to hunt swine at night. These rules do not grant access to any property. Landholders must grant permission for anyone to enter private property lawfully.

For hunter safety instruction, tell folks that day or night they need to stick to basic firearm and archery safety:

- Always point a firearm or bow in a safe direction.
- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded and never assume a firearm is unloaded.
- Keep your finger out of the trigger guard and off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Be sure of your target and what is beyond your target.

It is important to have had an advanced scouting trip in daylight to “walk the field” and identify safe shooting zones.

Hunter educators should stress:

- Know your field of fire.
- Do not use a night vision scope to scan a field.
- Never shoot at movement, noise, color or shapes.

If hunting in a group, know where others are at all times and communicate. Make verbal directions clear and specific so that there is nothing is left to question.

It is always a good idea to let someone know when and where you are hunting. Have additional light sources, extra batteries and protective eyewear.

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Day two of the workshop was set up on a four-session rotation, allowing each group to be small enough to allow one-on-one interaction with the instructors.

The sessions were broken into firearms and range; archery; tree-stand safety; wilderness survival; and conservation and hunter responsibility. Each session covered the material found in the hunter education student manual, *Today's Hunter*.

In the evening, open-ranges were available for the participants to allow more time for shotgun and archery experience.

The third and final day of the workshop began with Event Manager training, followed by the certification exam. Wrap-up included discussion of the tournament program, explanation of Range Safety Officer training, and written evaluation.

So what did the teachers have to say about the experience on their evaluations? Here are a sampling of their comments:

- Solid workshop set-up. Would be hard to improve upon.
- Very pleased. Glad I was able to attend.
- Workshop was very beneficial. All topics covered were in good detail, and allowed for hands-on learning.
- Everything was great along with the resources given to us.
- Thanks guys for a great workshop.
- Great hands-on!!

- Wish I could have come earlier to do orienteering and muzzle-loading. I had a lot of fun and enjoyed the location. I would love to see this continue.
- Great time, good food, and really appreciated how each of you treated us as students.
- This workshop was very hands-on and I learned a lot. Keep up the good work!
- Fantastic hands-on, as well as classroom instruction! Super job!
- Very informative and enjoyable.
- This was the BEST workshop I have attended. The hands-on was top notch. Involving all the aspects. Everyone on your staff is helpful, understanding, supportive, encouraging, extremely knowledgeable, experienced and friendly. Thank you.

After the workshop concluded, teachers walked away with experience in every aspect of the hunter education course content.

Veteran instructors walked away with new ideas and knowledge to add to their current hunter education programs, while new instructors left excited and with anticipation to begin new programs at their schools.

Planning has already begun for an improved version of the Teacher Skills Workshop next summer. The Hunter Education Program will provide more details on the 2013 workshop in the future.



Specialists Hilton Best and Tim Lemon explain firearms safety to teachers in the workshop before going to the firing range.



Teachers learn the fundamentals of using a compass from specialists Chris Kent and Kevin Crabtree, before trying it themselves.



Specialist Randy Thomas demonstrates the use of a laser gun, with each attendee receiving one upon completing the course.



Specialist Tim Lemon assists teacher Gale Brickhouse with a muzzleloader during live-fire activities.

North Carolina Once Again Fields Top Competitors at YHEC

NRA's Justin McDaniel from Hunting Communications was at the 2012 Youth Hunter Education Challenge and contributed these reports:

Mansfield, Penn. — Park Ridge Christian School and Gray Stone Day School, both from Stanly County, won team championship honors at this year's 27th annual International Youth Hunter Education Challenge, held at Mansfield University and Mill Cove Environmental Center from July 22-27. Members of both teams took first place in the individual division competition.

More than 300 youth hunters from 13 states, plus their families and coaches, took part in the event, which is the largest and most comprehensive youth hunter skills competition of its kind.

The aim of the YHEC program is to build on the concepts kids learn in conventional hunter education classes and have them apply that knowledge under simulated hunting conditions. YHEC consists of eight events that challenge each participant's marksmanship abilities, woodsmanship and safety knowledge.

Participants shot muzzleloaders at knock-down silhouette targets, .22-caliber rifles at spinner targets, shotguns on a multiple-station sporting clays course, and archery on a wooded 3-D course. All of the shooting events were designed to simulate actual hunting situations as closely as possible, and only conventional sporting arms and bows were used. The remaining four events, known as responsibility challenges, included a map and compass course, a written test called the Hunter Responsibility Exam, a wildlife identification course, and the Hunter Safety Trail, where the young hunters encountered scenarios that required a safety or ethical decision.

YHEC event director Lenny Rees, a retired hunter education administrator for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, says the time kids put in practicing and becoming better shooters teaches them lessons that not only prepare them for the field, but life.

"YHEC really teaches kids life skills," said Rees, who has run the rifle event at YHEC for the past 17 years. "First of all, to be able to handle winning, but, more importantly, how to handle times when things might not go as well as you had hoped. It also teaches young people how to concentrate and focus on what they're doing."

To learn more about the YHEC program or to get involved, visit www.nrayhec.org

2012 International YHEC Overall Winners and Scores

Junior Individual Division

1. Shannon Efrid, N.C. Park Ridge Sharpshooters, 1830
2. Zachary Meyer, Arkansas Realtree Juniors, 1805
3. David Leavitt, Oregon Junior Team, 1695

Senior Individual Division

1. Hunter Efrid, N.C. Gray Stone Marksmanship, 1882
2. Andrew Welker, N.C. Gray Stone Marksmanship, 1862
3. Nicholas Kiter, N.C. Forbush Senior Red, 1817

Junior Team Division

1. N.C. Park Ridge Sharpshooters, 8338 Mitchell Faulkner, Shannon Efrid, Megan Frick, Skyler Efrid, Patrick Stamey, Coach Heath Efrid
2. Oregon Junior Team, 7799
3. PA Junior Gold, 7088

Senior Team Division

1. N.C. Gray Stone Marksmanship, 8717 Andrew Welker, Jackson Allen, Michael Huneycutt, Hunter Efrid, Jenna Stamey, Coach Eric Efrid
2. Oregon Senior Team, 8661
3. N.C. Forbush Senior Red, 8332 Norris McLelland II, Colton Horn, Drew Queen, Nicholas Kiter, Dakota Baker, Coach Joel Dinkins



Shannon Efrid and Hunter Efrid, fellow competitors, fellow winners, kin.

A Case of the Competing Cousins

As 16-year-old Hunter Efrid stood on stage inside Straughn Auditorium on the campus of Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pa., with his friends and teammates from the North Carolina Gray Stone Marksmanship Team, he didn't think his week could get any better. Hunter and his teammates had just captured the senior team championship, a title that had just eluded them the year before.

Moments earlier, his cousin, Shannon Efrid, had been named the individual champion in YHEC's junior division, becoming the first female ever to claim high overall honors in the 27-year history of YHEC. Shannon's success had also propelled her team, the Park Ridge Sharpshooters, which was coached by Hunter's dad, Heath, to the junior team title.

And, to his surprise, Hunter pulled off the Albemarle sweep, claiming his second straight senior title to go with the junior championship he won in 2010.

"It's pretty special," Hunter said afterwards, fighting back the raw emotion of the moment. "I really feel like there was a guiding force involved. I'll be honest, I prayed so much. I feel like God was on my right shoulder the whole time."

Hunter said his individual title was sweeter this time around because it was paired with a team victory.

"Last year, we didn't win it as a team," he said. "That was the worst part. I know it's all about coming out here and having fun ... I'm just so glad we got an opportunity to do this. It's not bittersweet like last year. This is pure sugar."

His cousin's historic victory was the cherry on top.

"Shannon deserves this more than anyone," said Hunter. "Hands down, she was the best shooter out here."

"The crazy thing is now she's competition for next year," Hunter added, laughing. "She's really good."

Shannon's unprecedented achievement is indicative of the growing presence of women in hunting and shooting.

"It's an honor," said Shannon, 14. "It's so great to be able to share this with my team. I know they're the ones who got me here."

Shannon, who has hunted since age 7 and lists whitetail deer as her favorite quarry, said that months of practice, sometimes every day, made the difference.



On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

We have survived another North Carolina summer! Fall means a welcome relief from temperatures at or near the century mark and high humidity. By the time this is published, dove season and archery deer season will be in.

Again, the Hunter Education Program has had a busy summer. Months of planning culminated in the Teacher Outdoor Skills Workshop held in Crossnore. This workshop was the result of the Hunter Education Program strengthening our partnerships with North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T University and Mount Olive College.

In meeting with teachers and administrators from public schools across the state, a special project team from the Hunter Education Program quickly identified that teachers were interested in hands-on and practical experiences to enhance their hunter education delivery in the classroom, and set about establishing the sort of program they would want and could afford to attend. The results from that inaugural effort were outstanding. We are already evaluating and planning for next year's workshop.

It is with pride that I congratulate Kim Tavasso on his recognition from the International Hunter Education Association, earning its Hall of Fame Award. Mr. Tavasso's achievement is a source of pride for all of us in the Hunter Education Program and here at the Wildlife Resources Commission.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the success of the teams and individuals that represented North Carolina at the 2012 Youth Hunter Education Challenge. The traditions of hunting and shooting sports are being entrusted into capable hands with this group. The true success of this group is their behavior and sportsmanship. This is no doubt a direct reflection of their parents, teachers, coaches and everyone who has mentored them.

The Hunter Education Program has always had a commitment to excellence and this has been present on a national scale with the recognition of Kim Tavasso and the success of the Youth Hunter Education Skills Teams. Good job to everyone! Until next time, keep your muzzles high and powder dry.

Travis J. Casper

Adventures and Fun at the Advanced Hunter Education Workshop

By Wade Betts, D-1 Hunter Education Instructor

Driving to Ellerbe from Elizabeth City takes about five hours, we made it in just under eight. There are a lot of gun shops along the way. If you count Walmart, we went to a total of five.

A.C. Carver and I had signed up for the Advanced Hunter Education Instructor Workshop at Camp Millstone. About 8 a.m. on Friday we headed out. My wife said I had enough gear to fill A.C.'s wife's car, and he had just as much. With all the guns, clothes and fishing tackle, I have to say a Nissan Versa has a lot of room.

The advanced Hunter Education Instructor Workshop is held every year. Its purpose is to make us smarter and also to reward us for being volunteer instructors. There are advanced hunter ed courses like reloading, orienteering, survival and best of all, talking turkey. Courses like orienteering are certification courses and some like talking turkey are more for fun. After taking a certification course, instructors are certified to teach that course. Extracurricular activities included fishing, skeet shooting and swapping lies.

After checking in and finding a bunk in one of the cabins, we broke out the fishing rods and wet our lines in Millstone Lake.

Black crappie, or as people who know better call them, "speckled perch," were the fish of the day. After dark A.C. and I used lighted bobbers and shrimp to try and catch some catfish. An older gentleman who had been coming to Camp Millstone for years said he had never seen a catfish caught in the lake. It took a while, but we both caught one.

As people that know me already know, I love me some talking turkey. This class was half learning to be a better turkey hunter and half telling stories about turkey hunts. The two instructors were both from the mountains of North Carolina. They talked about being above and below toms. Around here the turkey woods is flat, but I think I can adapt what I learned and make it work where I hunt. We could have talked for a lot longer, but as it was, we were late for lunch.

The workshop instructors were either hunter education specialists or wildlife officers and all were very knowledgeable. They fed us good and the cabins were comfortable, a good weekend for sure. The trip home was uneventful. I pressed "home" on the GPS and away we went. A.C. said, "I have got to get me a GPS."

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Nationwide, Hunters Lost Access to Land in the Past Year

When asked in a HunterSurvey.com poll if access to any of the places they tried to hunt in the past year had been restricted or placed off limits to them, nearly 23 percent of hunters said it had. When compared to the previous year's results to the same question, hunters who lost land access grew by less than one percent, a statistically insignificant bump, but their numbers still reveal that nearly one in four sportsmen nationwide are potentially affected by losing access to available hunting land.

"Finding a place to hunt remains one of the biggest challenges to hunters and hunter recruitment," said Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which conducts the surveys at HunterSurvey.com. "As available lands for hunting diminish or change ownership, some hunters will inevitably grow frustrated and pursue other activities."

Indeed, more than half (52 percent) of those respondents who lost access to a hunting location said their time spent hunting last

year was reduced as a result — a seven percent increase over the previous year—while 11 percent said the lost land kept them from hunting altogether. With slashes in government funding and private properties increasingly restricted, land access will continue to be an issue for many sportsmen. In North Carolina, sportsmen benefit from the game lands program of the Wildlife Resources Commission, which maintains 2 million acres for use by hunters, trappers and fishermen.

"It is important that we, as sportsmen, help remove barriers to hunting," said Geoff Cantrell, the public information officer for North Carolina's Hunter Education Program. "Promoting our game lands, sharing locations and some good advice, could make a crucial difference in someone's hunting experience. It might be the next best thing to taking them hunting with you."

More information on hunting opportunities, both public and private, is available at www.ncwildlife.org.

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